

-- "Buckets to Backpacks" program to distribute 100,000 PackH2O water backpacks

COLUMBUS, Ohio, May 11, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- More than 600,000 people in water stressed communities across Rwanda will benefit from a program that will distribute personal water backpacks that make it easier for women and children to carry water from source to home and to keep that water clean. The 2-year "Buckets to Backpacks" program will bring 100,000 donated PackH2O™ water backpacks courtesy of Stars Foundation to people in Rwanda through a partnership of Greif FPS, the developer of the Pack, along with Partners In Health, Stars Foundation, the Rwandan Ministry of Health and PackH2O.



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The program was announced as a Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Commitment to Action by President Clinton at the CGI Middle East & Africa meeting, being held May 5-7 in Marrakech. Said Kelsey Langdale, Executive Director of PackH2O, "we are thrilled by the partnership and collaboration of these efforts to support communities in Rwanda with this life changing public health tool."

Many people in developing nations use contaminated, discarded jerry cans and containers to carry water from source to home. The Buckets to Backpacks program in Rwanda is expected to positively impact 600,000 Rwandan people by making it easier to carry water for daily household use and to keep it clean. With the cooperation of the Rwandan Ministry of Health and local community support, nurses in the local communities will distribute the PackH2O water backpacks and help families understand the health benefits of keeping water clean.

The goal of the program is to comprehensively address water issues and find long term, sustainable solutions. The project encompasses the distribution of water backpacks, education and training and the creation of micro-entrepreneurship opportunities.

The PackH2O water backpack was developed to ease the human burden of transporting water and help to eradicate waterborne illness through solar disinfection technology that allows the PackH2O liners to be sanitized in the sun. A business model has been developed around the assembly and the selling and servicing of the backpacks to support micro-entrepreneurs in the Rwandan communities.

Up to 2.4 billion people live in water-stressed areas. UNICEF estimates that women and children in developing nations spend 200 million hours collecting water daily, often from distant sources, and then carrying it home in discarded jerry cans and buckets that were originally used to contain lubricants, agrichemicals or fuel oils. Furthermore, in almost all cases studied, the discarded containers harbored harmful bacteria. Water in a typical 20 liter container alone weighs 44 pounds.

Individuals and organizations can support the initiative in Rwanda, as well as relief efforts in Nepal, through a program with PackH2O by visiting www.PackH2O.org/donate.

The PackH2O's innovative, for-purpose design to ease transport of water and help keep it clean was previously recognized by Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Popular Science's Best of What's New Award, and Global Green USA's Industrial Design Award.

About PackH2O

Established in 2013, PackH2O is a US based non-profit headquartered in Columbus, Ohio. Lead by Executive Director, Kelsey Langdale, PackH2O's vision is to get a PackH2O water backpack to everyone who needs one. To date more than 175,000 PackH2O packs have been distributed through Langdale's efforts in partnership with such organizations as Partners for Care, Special Olympics, Habitat for Humanity International, CxCatalyts and Operation Blessing International.

For more information about PackH2O, visit www.packh2o.org and follow us on Twitter @packh2o and like us on Facebook

About Stars Foundation

Stars Foundation invests in organizations and ideas that transform the lives of disadvantaged children and their communities globally. Founded in 2001 by Al-Dabbagh Group and based in London, Stars is an independent charity committed to reaching 20 million people by 2020. Stars' Game-Changing Initiatives (GCI) program works with the private sector to invest in game-changing solutions to development challenges. The PackH2O initiative provides Stars with the opportunity to work in Rwanda for the first time, in a diverse partnership between business, government and non-profit organizations.

About the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI)

Established in 2005 by President Bill Clinton, the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI), an initiative of the Clinton Foundation, convenes global leaders to create and implement solutions to the world's most pressing challenges. CGI Annual Meetings have brought together more than 190 heads of state, 20 Nobel Prize laureates, and hundreds of leading CEOs, heads of foundations and NGOs, major philanthropists, and members of the media. To date, members of the CGI community have made nearly 3,200 Commitments to Action, which have improved the lives of over 430 million people in more than 180 countries.

In addition to the Annual Meeting, CGI convenes CGI America, a meeting focused on collaborative solutions to economic recovery in the United States; and CGI University (CGI U), which brings together undergraduate and graduate students to address pressing challenges in their community or around the world. This year, CGI will also convene CGI Middle East & Africa, which will bring together leaders across sectors to take action on pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges. For more information, visit clintonglobalinitiative.org and follow us on Twitter @ClintonGlobal and Facebook at facebook.com/clintonglobalinitiative.

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